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# MP106 'CHISM update for Unknown WAN Variant'

## Modification Report

Version 1.0

14 December 2020

Corporate member of  
Plain English Campaign  
Committed to clearer  
communication

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## About this document

This document is a draft Modification Report. It currently sets out the background, issue, proposed solution, impacts, costs, implementation approach and progression timetable for this modification, along with any relevant discussions, views and conclusions.

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This document has four annexes:

- **Annex A** contains the business requirements for the Proposed Solution.
- **Annex B** contains the redlined changes to the Smart Energy Code (SEC) required to deliver the proposed solution.
- **Annex C** contains the full Data Communications Company (DCC) Preliminary Assessment response.
- **Annex D** contains the full responses received to the Refinement Consultation

## Contact

If you have any questions on this modification, please contact:

**Bradley Baker**

020 7770 6597

bradley.baker@gemserv.com

## 1. Summary

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This proposal was raised by Chun Chen from the DCC.

For a DCC User to obtain information about Smart Metering Wide Area Network (SM WAN) Coverage, they must send Service Request 12.1 'Request WAN Matrix'. The Data Service Provider (DSP) will then provide an Availability Date and WAN Variant in response. WAN Variants are listed in Table 3 of SEC Appendix I 'Communications Hub Installation and Maintenance Support Materials (CHISM)' Annex E. In the exception case where the Availability Date for SM WAN Coverage is known, but the WAN Variant is not, with the implementation of SEC Modification [MP081 'Alignment of DUIS and CHISM to reflect current DCC Processing'](#), the DSP will return " " Space for the South and Central regions.

As a result of the agreed solution of MP081, the response " " Space has been highlighted as a potential cause of confusion for the Supplier.

Following the Refinement Consultation and discussions held at the SEC Working Group, the Proposed Solution is to make an addition to the legal text in SEC Appendix I which will provide guidance for DCC Users, stating that the " " Space response should be read as "Unknown". This is due to the high implementation costs stated in the DCC Preliminary Assessment to replace the " " Space response with "Unknown" via a DCC System change. It was agreed that providing guidance is more suitable when looking at the costs and benefits of the modification.

This change will not have any DCC System impacts and so will be limited to Smart Energy Code Administrator and Secretariat (SECAS) time and effort only, with minimal lead time. It will impact Large Suppliers and Small Suppliers and is targeted for the June 2021 SEC Release.

## 2. Issue

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### What are the current arrangements?

When a DCC User sends Service Request 12.1 'Request WAN Matrix' to receive information about SM WAN Coverage, in most cases they will receive an Availability Date and WAN Variant. However, in an exception case, the Communications Service Provider (CSP) for the South and Central regions may respond to a SM WAN Coverage request (CSPM-S1 or CSPM-S2) with an Availability Date for coverage but without being able to confirm the WAN Variant that will need to be used. On receipt of this data, the DSP returns the Availability Date and the value of the unconfirmed WAN Variant in the response to Service Request 12.1 'Request WAN Matrix'. The CSP North is not affected by this problem as this response is not available for this region.

The WAN variant returned by the DSP is defined by Table 3 in SEC Appendix I 'Communications Hub Installation and Maintenance Support Materials' (CHISM) Annex E as below:

WAN Variant (DCC 1.3)	WAN Variant (DCC 2.0)	CSP Region
Standard 420	420	CSP North
Variant 450	450	CSP North
Cellular	Cellular	CSP South & Central
Cellular+Mesh	Cellular+Mesh	CSP South & Central
No Coverage Intended	No Coverage Intended	N/A
“ “ Space	“ “ Space	CSP South & Central

With the implementation of [MP081 'Alignment of DUIS and CHISM to reflect current DCC Processing'](#), “ “ Space will be used to indicate the unconfirmed WAN Variant for the CSP for South and Central regions.

During a User engagement design discussion, it was highlighted by a Supplier that the “ “ Space response would be confusing and Users would prefer a more meaningful response. It has been suggested that the wording to use is “Unknown”.

### What is the issue?

The WAN Variant “ “ Space has been highlighted as being confusing to Users. A Large Supplier has commented that this response lacks meaning. A more suitable term should be used to identify the scenario where an Availability Date can be provided but the WAN Variant cannot. This affects South and Central regions only.

In order to provide the clarity required, Table 3 in CHISM Annex E should be amended.

### What is the impact this is having?

As a result of the agreed solution of [MP081 'Alignment of DUIS and CHISM to reflect current DCC Processing'](#), Users send Service Request 12.1 'Request WAN Matrix' to check the SM WAN Coverage to obtain SM WAN coverage. “ “ Space is returned as the WAN variant in the exception case that an Availability Date for coverage is confirmed but the WAN Variant is not. This has been highlighted as a potential cause of confusion for the DCC User.

## 3. Solution

### Proposed Solution

The Proposed Solution is to add guidance to SEC Appendix I 'CH Installation and Maintenance Support'. This addition to the legal text will clarify to DCC Users that the DSP response “ “ Space should be interpreted as “Unknown”.

## 4. Impacts

This section summarises the impacts that would arise from the implementation of this modification.

### SEC Parties

SEC Party Categories impacted			
	Large Suppliers		Small Suppliers
	Electricity Network Operators		Gas Network Operators
	Other SEC Parties		DCC

As the Proposed Solution is to add guidance to SEC Appendix I 'CH Installation and Maintenance Support Materials' so that the DSP response of " " Space is read as "Unknown", there is no impact on any SEC Party Category.

### DCC System

This SEC Modification will have no impact on DCC Systems.

### SEC and subsidiary documents

The following parts of the SEC will be impacted:

- Appendix I 'CH Installation and Maintenance Support Materials'

The changes to the SEC required to deliver the proposed solution can be found in Annex B.

### Consumers

This modification will have no impact on Consumers.

### Other industry Codes

This modification will have no impact on other industry Codes.

### Greenhouse gas emissions

This modification will have no impact on greenhouse gas emissions.

## 5. Costs

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### DCC costs

There are no anticipated DCC implementation costs.

### SECAS costs

The estimated SECAS implementation costs to implement this modification is one day of effort, amounting to approximately £600. The activities needed to be undertaken for this are:

- Updating the SEC and releasing the new version to the industry.

### SEC Party costs

There will be no SEC Party costs.

## 6. Implementation approach

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### Panel agreed implementation approach

The SEC Panel agreed an implementation date of:

- **24 June 2021** (June 2021 SEC Release) if a decision to approve is received before 3 June 2021; or
- **4 November 2021** (November 2021 SEC Release) if a decision to approve is received after 3 June 2021 but on or before 21 October 2021.

Following the expected date of the Change Board's decision, the earliest release this modification can be implemented in is the June 2021 SEC Release. If, however, the modification is approved after 3 June 2021, the modification will be implemented in the next possible release, the November 2021 SEC Release.

## 7. Assessment of the proposal

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### Observations on the issue

CSC members were supportive of the proposal and felt that the issue was well defined. The proposal was also presented to the other SEC Sub-Committees. Each SEC Sub-Committee was happy for the proposal to progress and provided no further comments on the issue.

## **Solution development**

Originally, the wording change for the unconfirmed WAN Variant to “Unknown” was suggested by a DCC User during a User engagement design discussion. The Proposed Solution was to replace the DSP response “ “ Space with “Unknown”. Business requirements were agreed by the Proposer (see Annex A) and a Preliminary Assessment performed.

However, this was costed at £150,000 up to the end of Pre-Integration Testing (PIT) in the DCC Preliminary Assessment (see Annex C). This was deemed too expensive for what appeared to be a minor change and the DCC was challenged to explain the costs. The DCC explained that there would need to be numerous changes to the CSP for South and Central regions’ systems. As part of the design changes, the DSP would also have needed to make amendments to documentation. The DCC also advised that due to the short turnaround time (15 Working Days), Service Providers had to estimate costs broadly before refining them further under the DCC Impact Assessment. Working Group members stated that they want to see more transparency in modification costs moving forwards.

It was highlighted by Refinement Consultation respondents and agreed by the Working Group members that the business case was dramatically reduced because of the costs involved. It was proposed that adding guidance following Table 3 of CHISM would be sufficient, as the scale of the issue is not yet fully understood due to MP081 not yet being implemented.

The Working Group agreed with the non DCC System impacting solution and felt it should be progressed. The Proposer agreed and acknowledged that due to the high costs of the original Proposed Solution something simpler and less expensive should be progressed. A Working Group member queried if this solution would still require a modification. The DCC confirmed the guidance would be added to SEC Appendix I. As this forms a SEC Subsidiary Document a modification is still needed to amend it.

Although the Change Board had initially approved the costs of the Impact Assessment (£19,480), due to the change to the Proposed Solution, the DCC Impact Assessment was not required and so was not requested.

## **Support for Change**

### **Working Group**

The Working Group was supportive of the amended Proposed Solution, believing it to be the most cost-effective approach to resolving the identified issue. It did not believe there would be sufficient benefits to justify the cost of changing the DCC Systems to report “Unknown” instead of “ “ Space.

### **Refinement consultation**

The three Refinement Consultation respondents felt the original Proposed Solution of amending the DSP response incurred too high a cost and suggested that providing guidance would be more cost-effective. Once this was discussed at the Working Group, the Proposer agreed that this was the best way forward.

## Views against the General SEC Objectives

### Proposer's views

The Proposer believes that this modification better facilitates SEC Objectives (a)<sup>1</sup>, (c)<sup>2</sup> and (g)<sup>3</sup>. This is because the Proposed Solution will give a better indication of the scenario where the WAN Variant is unknown, making it clear to Suppliers of the situation. This modification will add further clarity to the SEC by removing potential confusion when a User requests SM WAN coverage.

### Industry views

SECAS received three responses to the Refinement Consultation and each respondent raised concern regarding the implementation costs. Issues have arisen surrounding the business case as the relatively small amendment has such a high associated cost. However, two of the respondents did agree with the Proposer that the original solution would have better facilitated SEC Objectives (a) and (g).

## Views against the consumer areas

### Improved safety and reliability

This modification will have a neutral impact on the safety and reliability of the smart metering systems.

### Lower bills than would otherwise be the case

This modification will have a neutral impact on the cost of energy bills.

### Reduced environmental damage

This modification will have a neutral impact on environmental damage.

### Improved quality of service

This modification will provide a positive impact on the quality of service as the Proposed Solution removes the margin for confusion for Suppliers when they receive the DSP response “ “ Space, allowing them to action next steps sooner and address connectivity issues more efficiently.

### Benefits for society as a whole

This modification will have a neutral impact regarding benefits for society as a whole.

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<sup>1</sup> Facilitate the efficient provision, installation, operation and interoperability of smart metering systems at energy consumers' premises within Great Britain.

<sup>2</sup> Facilitate energy consumers' management of their use of electricity and gas through the provision of appropriate information via smart metering systems.

<sup>3</sup> Facilitate the efficient and transparent administration and implementation of the SEC.



## Appendix 1: Progression timetable

This modification will now be presented to Panel with the recommendation it be issued for Modification Report Consultation, followed by the Change Board vote under Self-Governance.

Timetable	
Event/Action	Date
Draft Proposal raised	30 Dec 2019
Presented to CSC for final comment and recommendations	28 Jan 2020
Panel converts Draft Proposal to Modification Proposal	14 Feb 2020
Business requirements developed with Proposer and DCC	Feb 2020
Preliminary Assessment requested	26 Mar 2020
Preliminary Assessment returned	11 Jun 2020
Discuss at the July Working Group meeting	1 Jul 2020
Refinement Consultation	8 Jul 2020 – 29 Jul 2020
Impact Assessment costs approved by Change Board	22 Jul 20
Modification discussed at Working Group	7 Oct 20
Legal text amended	Oct 20
Modification Report approved by Panel	11 Dec 20
Modification Report Consultation	14 Dec 20 – 8 Jan 21
Change Board Vote	20 Jan 21

## Appendix 2: Glossary

This table lists all the acronyms used in this document and the full term they are an abbreviation for.

Glossary	
Acronym	Full term
CHISM	Communications Hub Installation and Maintenance Support Materials
CSC	Change Sub-Committee
CSP	Communication Service Provider
DCC	Data Communications Company
DSP	Data Service Provider
DUIS	DCC User Interface Specification
SEC	Smart Energy Code
SECAS	Smart Energy Code Administrator and Secretariat
SM WAN	Smart Metering Wide Area Network
WAN	Wide Area Network